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Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Iraq informs Security Council that, effective Wednesday, it suspended removal of property from demilitarized zone and authorized United Nations aircraft to fly into Iraq "on a case-to-case basis".

+ Secretary-General welcomes agreement between 14 Somalian political leaders in Addis Ababa as first step to country's reconstruction.

+ Co-Chairmen Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen to meet Croatian, Bosnian Presidents in Zagreb today; summit talks on Bosnia Herzegovina likely to resume late next week.

+ In Paris today, Secretary-General confirms elections in Cambodia will be held on time; to visit Phnom Penh next month.

+ Secretary-General continues talks with political leaders in Paris; receives doctorate degree.

+ Unprecedented food relief effort for southern Africa, says World Food Programme.

+ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on four-day visit to Saudi Arabia; to tour refugee camp.

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Iraq informed the Security Council that, as of last Wednesday, it had suspended removal of its property from Umm Qasr and the demilitarized zone, and it allowed United Nations aircraft to fly to Iraq on a "case-to-case basis".

In a letter addressed to Security Council President Yoshio Hatano (Japan), the Foreign Minister of Iraq, Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, stresses that the suspension of removal of Iraqi property will continue until the "ambiguity that has arisen with the United Nations Observation Mission has been resolved" and a "formula agreeable to both parties has been arrived at". The Foreign Minister also emphasizes the importance of reaching a suitable formula "that

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will allow Iraq to recover its property in Umm Qasr and the demilitarized zone, which is an undisputed right".

Mr. Al-Sahaf further stresses that, regarding the United Nations flights to his country, Iraq will not assume any responsability for the safety of United Nations aircraft inside its airspace, "because of the aggression to which Iraq is subjected by United States, United Kingdom and French aircraft".

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali expressed his pleasure today upon receiving a message from Addis Ababa informing him that agreement had been reached for an immediate cease-fire and disarmament in Somalia between the 14 Somalian political leaders. The agreement also calls for an ad hoc committee, comprising seven Somalian leaders, which is mandated to prepare for the Conference on national reconciliation due to be held on 15 March 1993 at the Headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission on Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa.

In a statement issued in Paris, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali expressed the hope that this positive result would contribute to the re-establishment of peace and security, national reconciliation, restoration of the Somalian State and the reconstruction and development of Somalia.

The Secretary-General also sent a telegram to the President of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, to express the gratitude of the international community for the role he played in the conclusion of this agreement reached in close cooperation with the representatives of the United Nations and the regional and non-regional organizations.

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Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia, left Geneva for Zagreb, where they were scheduled to meet later today with Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, the President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegovic, and with Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban. According to the Spokesman for the Conference, the talks were likely to focus on the map illustrating the ten-province structure proposed by the Co-Chairmen as part of a comprehensive political settlement for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Spokesman also stressed that the map question would be taken up in the next round, scheduled to take place most likely in the "latter part of next week".

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali confirmed today in Paris that the Cambodian elections would take place on the determined date and announced that he would be visiting Phnom Penh next month.

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The Secretary-General made this announcement following a meeting this morning with Hor Nam Hong, Member of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia, during which he briefed Mr. Hor Nam Hong on his contacts with Prince Norodom Sihanouk. The two expressed hope that the difficulties created by one of the political parties would be overcome.

In a related development, investigations are still underway to determine the identity of the perpetrators behind the 12 January attack on a village in the district capital of Siem Reap in Cambodia, in which two Cambodian nationals with the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) and a seven-year-old local girl were killed and several other UNTAC personnel were injured, according to a UNTAC Spokesman.

The Spokesman also said a number of politically-motivated incidents had occurred over the last 48 hours. On 12 January, a rocket attack, followed by a M-16 rifle firing, had taken place on the office of a political party in which four persons were injured. A similar attack took place on 13 January and three men were arrested in that connection.

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Concluding his visit to Paris, the Secretary-General met today in the French capital with Foreign Minister of Belarus, Petr K. Kravchenka, to discuss the problem of Chernobyl, and the importance of strengthening relations between Belarus and the United Nations. The Minister extended an official invitation to the Secretary-General to visit Belarus.

Later, Mr. Boutros-Ghali met with Kiro Gligorov, President of the former Republic of Macedonia, which was followed by a meeting with Necephore Dieudonne Soglo, President of Bénin. The Secretary-General discussed with Mr. Soglo the problems of the African continent and the role of the United Nations in aiding its development.

In a reply to a question regarding a possible United Nations military intervention in Liberia, the Secretary-General said that it was a decision to be taken by the Security Council.

In the afternoon, the Secretary-General was awarded an honorary doctorate degree by the Paris Institute of Political Science.

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In the largest such relief effort in Africa, 4.9 million metric tons of drought-related imports (cereals, non-cereals and fertilizer) for countries in southern Africa have been delivered to regional ports between April and December 1992 through unprecedented regional coordination, says a report released yesterday by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Logistics Advisory Centre.

However, the report warns, Malawi risks a critical shortage of food in February because the country was late in placing commercial orders for food.

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Pledges of food aid for the market sector remains low and the delivery rates achieved to date do not cover Malawi's needs even if there was enough food in the pipeline.

The report will be reviewed at a meeting of SADC agriculture and transport ministers to be held in Harare tomorrow. A similar meeting held last April in Lusaka set up the Logistics Advisory Centre as part of the regional response to the drought. The Centre coordinates relief logistics throughout the region, linking donors, SADC Governments, shipping agents and transport services in an effort to move aid smoothly.

The report analyzes the performance of the six transport corridors and nine ports serving the region. More than 85 per cent of the flows into land-locked countries have been by rail.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata, was scheduled to leave today on a four-day visit to Saudi Arabia, which includes a tour of a refugee camp housing nearly 30,000 Iraqis displaced as a result of the Gulf crisis, according to a UNHCR press release from Geneva.

Mrs. Ogata will brief Saudi decision-makers on global refugee hot spots from Afghanistan to the former Yugoslavia. She will meet with officials of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and hold talks with representatives of Islamic relief groups and Saudi non-governmental organizations. On Saturday, Mrs. Ogata will spend touring the Rafha refugee camp, home to an estimated 28,500 Iraqis, about 600 kilometres north-west of Riyadh.

Under a UNHCR-assisted resettlement programme, that began in October 1992, nearly 3,500 Iraqi refugees have found new homes in 23 different countries. The majority are being resettled in Iran, United States, Syria, United Kingdom and the Nordic countries. In addition, nearly 1,000 Iraqi refugees have voluntarily repatriated.

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